

Tuffin Ferraby & Taylor

Land at Friars Gate / Barbould Street  
Warrington, Cheshire

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

NGR SJ 6063 8797

Planning Reference 97/37134 & 37136

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

November 1998

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NGR SJ 6063 8797

Planning Reference 97/31734 & 31736

Prepared by: Duncan Wood

Date: November 1998

Checked by:

*JR Smith*

Date:

*12th November 98*

Approved by:

*R. Williams*

Date:

HEAD OF FIELDWORK

*13/11/1998*

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Warrington Cheshire**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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# Land at Friars Gate / Barbauld Street Warrington, Cheshire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

### SUMMARY

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Friars Gate / Barbauld Street, Warrington, Cheshire on behalf of Tuffin, Ferraby and Taylor. The site consisted of one standing building and an associated car park. The development area lay within the medieval precinct and over the site of the Friary church. The evaluation took the form of three trenches within the car park, no work was undertaken in the existing building as it was still in use. The monitoring was designed to investigate the level at which archaeological deposits survive below present ground surface and was carried out in connection with a planning application for a traditional ale, wine and food bar (Planning refs 97/37134 & 37136). The evaluation trenches identified two east-west aligned sandstone walls, a sandstone slab floor and the remains of a disturbed grave cut. There was considerable modern disturbance due to post-medieval development and previous excavations on the site. However, the level of preservation was good.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work (Fig.1)

In October 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Friars Gate / Barbauld Street on behalf of Tuffin Ferraby and Taylor with regard to a planning application for the construction of a traditional ale, wine and food bar (Planning Reference No. 97/37134 & 37136). The archaeological monitoring was in response to a brief issued by the Cheshire County Council Environmental Planning Service. The development site lay within the historic core of the town of Warrington and occupies an area of 0.07 hectares to the southeast of the junction of Friars Gate and Barbauld Street.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

The underlying geology is undifferentiated Permian and Triassic sandstone and was overlain by sand (British Geological Survey sheet 97). The development site is relatively flat, lying at around 9.4 m OD. The site is currently in use as a car park.

### 1.3 Historical and archaeological background

The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a desk study, a summary of the results are presented below. The complete desktop study can be found in Appendix 3.

The founding of Warrington Friary has never been satisfactorily dated although the site is historically recorded as having been established in 1291. The Friary prospered during the medieval period before being dissolved in 1536, and granted to Sir Thomas Holcroft in 1540. The site was granted to John Caldwell in 1543, on the condition that the people of Warrington were allowed to continue using the church. The date of the destruction of the Friary church is uncertain. It appears on a map of Warrington dating from 1643 but has disappeared by the time of the next map, which dates from 1772.

The 1772 map shows the site occupied by a building on the corner of Friars Gate and Friars Green (now Barbauld Street), and a large building to the south and west of the site. By the time of the 1826 map however, the building on the corner of Friars Gate and Friars Green had gone and the site was now a garden. This is the area of the present standing buildings. By 1880 the building on the site was a candle manufactory. This building is also shown on the maps of 1893, and 1907. By 1907 the open area on the corner of Friars Green and Friars Gate had been developed. The factory, described as the 'old candle factory' in 1936 (Owen) was demolished in 1931 to make room for an open garage.

The site of the Friary has been the subject of nine archaeological investigations in the last 120 years. These excavations confirm that the present development area overlies the Friary church. Excavations by Beamont, Worsley and Owen in the 1880's uncovered part of some of the column bases, a section of the northern wall and some inhumations in wooden coffins.

Excavation in the 1930's led to the production of a comprehensive site plan. These excavations identified the northern and western walls of the nave. A section of a wall is described as being found 'under cellar floor of house'. This would indicate that the lower levels of the Friary are likely to survive beneath the existing cellar or basement on site.

Excavations in 1978 by the North Cheshire Archaeological Group investigated 172 square metres of the site (60% of the car park). Unfortunately the archive does not include a plan of the site showing which areas were investigated. The excavation was carried out in two stages. Phase I identified 28 graves with multiple burials described as being 'in a remarkable state of preservation'. It is unclear whether these were removed or whether they are still *in-situ*. Two other burials were identified, one in the wall of the aisle, and the other beneath an incised grave slab (now stored in the museum). The excavations are believed to have truncated two periods of tile flooring, overlying an early clay floor. Phase II excavated a further 72 square metres of the site, identifying a further fifteen burials and structural elements of the transept's foundation.

In 1982 Liverpool University investigated an area at Bridge Foot to the south of the proposed development site. Remains relating to the Friary included a ditch and mosaic floor tiles.

An excavation in 1984, on the site of the former Co-op Store, exposed a probable robber trench of the Friary wall and excavation identified extensive demolition phases, but no *in situ* material of medieval date.

The final phase of investigation was in 1995 by Gifford and Partners. This encountered walls of the Friary church, and probably the cloister. The work also identified a number of robber trenches and 17<sup>th</sup>-century pits.

## 2 AIMS

- 2.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 2.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.3 To establish the depth of surviving archaeological remains below present ground level. This was designed to be as non-intrusive as possible.

- 2.4 To establish the approximate location, density and depth below ground level of any burials which may be affected by the development. All burials will be preserved *in-situ*.
- 2.5 To make available the results of the investigation.

### **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation comprised three machine excavated trenches supplemented by hand investigation of the archaeological deposits.

#### **3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork**

The archaeological brief limited the evaluation to three trenches (Fig.2) with a combined area not exceeding 25 m<sup>2</sup>. Trench 1 measured 4 m x 2 m and was designed to investigate the North Transept. Trench 2 measured 3 m x 3 m and investigated the northwest corner of the Nave. Trench 3 measured 3 m x 2 m and was located in the southeast corner of the site.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

The overburden was removed by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were investigated to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned at 1:20 and excavated sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

#### **3.3 Finds**

Hand sorting was employed to recover any finds. Spoil heaps were carefully monitored for finds during and after mechanical removal of the overburden.

#### **3.4 Environmental data**

No deposits suitable for environmental were identified.

### **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

#### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

The general soil type was silty sand overlain by clay loam backfilled deposits. Ground conditions were moderately dry.

#### **4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits**

Tarmac covered the entire site. In all three trenches recently disturbed soils overlay substantial layers of mottled yellow and grey silty sand. Trenches 1 and 2 contained wall foundations

constructed in red sandstone. Trench 2 identified a sandstone floor overlain by a post-medieval brick structure. Trench 3 identified a disturbed grave cut.

#### 4.3 Presentation of results

The results of the evaluation are described by trench starting with the earliest deposits. An inventory of all contexts is presented in Appendix 1. The Written Scheme of Investigation and the desktop assessment can be found in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits (Fig.3, 4 & 6)

#### 5.1.1 *Trench 1: N-S; 4 m x 2 m*

A wall foundation (108) measuring 1.8 m x 1.1 m was identified at a depth of 1.2 m from present ground surface, or 8.36 m OD. It was constructed from sub-angular red sandstone blocks (average size 0.3 m x 0.2 m) bonded with a grey sandy clay. The western edge of the structure appeared to have been robbed in antiquity. Three larger roughly squared blocks (107) extended north from structure 108. The largest block measured 0.7 m x 0.4 m. The two structures appeared to be contemporary. Only one course of sandstone was visible within the bottom of the trench.

To the west of the sandstone walls was a deposit of brownish grey silty sand (110) with a 5 % inclusion of grey clay. This was truncated by a linear north-south cut (109). The cut was only identified in the Northwest corner of the trench and extended beneath the level of excavation. It was filled by a greenish grey sand (106) with occasional fragments of sandstone, which butted the western edge of structures 107 and 108. Deposit 106 was overlain by a dark greyish brown sandy loam (105) up to 1.2 m thick. It contained substantial quantities of modern brick, sandstone and tarmac. Deposit 106 was overlain by hard core and tarmac (104), which represented the present surface of the car park.

The car park was truncated by a 0.4 m deep cut (103), which ran down the eastern edge of the trench. This was filled by loose silty (102) sand with a 70% inclusion of rubble and building debris. It was covered by a 0.04 m thick layer of tarmac.

#### 5.1.2 *Trench 2: N-S; 3 m x 3 m*

An east-west aligned structure (215) was identified at a depth of 1.08 m from present ground surface, or 8.33 m OD. It was constructed from three courses of roughly hewn sandstone blocks (average size 0.4 m x 0.3 m x 0.2 m). The base of the structure was not exposed. The sandstone was bonded with a grey silty clay with red sand inclusions. A deposit of grey sand with red mottling (214) overlay the sandstone foundation. The sandy deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.65 m but not bottomed. A stone floor at a level of 8.39 m OD overlay deposit 214. The floor was constructed from sandstone (210) and ironstone slabs (211). The sandstone slabs measured 0.45 m x 0.3 m and were up to 0.2 m thick. The ironstone slabs were slightly smaller, measuring 0.4 m x 0.2 m. The two sets of slabs appeared to be contemporary.

The northwest corner of floor 210 was truncated by a sub-rectangular cut (212) with vertical sides and a flat base. The cut was 1 m in length, 0.5 m wide and 0.8 m deep. It was filled by a dark greyish brown sandy silt (213), which contained occasional fragments of sandstone and brick.



Floor 210 was overlain by an east-west aligned wall (209), which extended across the width of the trench and to a level of 9.19 m OD. The wall was constructed from nine courses of red brick, which measured 240 mm x 120 mm x 60 mm. The bricks were bonded with a whitish grey mortar. Wall 209 was abutted by a north-south brick wall (208). The wall was only seen in the eastern section and was constructed from identical bricks to structure 209. Butting walls 208 and 209 was a third brick structure (207). This consisted of six courses of 'frogged' bricks, with occasional blocks or re-used sandstone. The structure measured 3 m x 1.2 m and was 0.5 m thick to a level 8.89 m OD. All of the structures (207-9) directly overlay the slab floor (210/211).

The brick structures were overlain by a demolition layer (206) consisting of brick, sandstone rubble and fragmented tarmac. The deposit was 0.6 m thick. The demolition layer was covered by a 0.2 m thick layer of concrete (205) and tarmac (204) to a level of 9.41 m OD. The tarmac was truncated by an east-west aligned linear cut (203) up to 0.9 m deep. The cut had vertical sides and a flat base. The cut was filled by a mixed rubble deposit (202) and covered with tarmac (201).

### 5.1.3 Trench 3: E-W; 3 m x 2 m

A single block of sandstone ashlar (307) was identified at a level of 8.24 m OD. It was identified in a sondage in the southwest corner of the trench and was aligned east-west. It measured 0.5 m x 0.35 m x 0.25 m as seen but was not completely exposed during the course of the evaluation. Abutting the ashlar block was a layer of brownish grey silty sand (305). The deposit was 0.28 m thick and contained fragments of sandstone and flecks of iron panning. Overlying deposit 305 was a dark brownish grey sandy silt (304). A deposit of brown silty clay (306) overlay deposit 304 in the northwest corner of the trench. A 0.08 m thick deposit of grey brown sandy silt (310) sealed deposits 304 and 306.

A layer of yellowish brown sand (303) covered the trench to a level of 8.49 m OD. A rectilinear cut (308) 1.1 m in length and 0.5 m wide truncated deposit 303. The cut was filled by a greyish sandy silt (309). It was agreed that the excavation of deposit 309 should cease after a maximum thickness of 0.1 m, due to the presence of human bone within the fill.

A dumped deposit (302) of clay loam, brick and limestone rubble overlay deposit 309. It was covered by a 0.04 m layer of tarmac (301). The tarmac was truncated by a north-south aligned linear cut (311). The cut was 1.5 m wide and 0.4 m deep. It was filled with grey grade 1 shingle (312) and covered with tarmac (313).

## 5.2 Finds

### 5.2.1 The pottery

The pottery assemblage comprised eight sherds with a total weight of 300 grammes. The entire assemblage consisted of post-medieval wares (mostly 18<sup>th</sup> century iron glaze) recovered from deposit 105. No medieval finds were recovered during the evaluation.

### 5.2.2 Other Finds

Two pieces of animal bone were recovered from contexts 105 and 309. One piece of slag, one piece of glass and a piece of copper alloy were also recovered.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The trenches were located to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site and not the specific footprint of the proposed building. It is impossible at present to assess whether archaeological deposits survive below the basement of the existing building. The trenches have shown that the well-preserved elements of the medieval Friary survive at relatively high levels beneath the current ground surface. However, the site has been substantially truncated by repeated archaeological investigation (see 1.3) since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This has reduced the potential for a reliable finds assemblage.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

#### 6.2.1 *Summary of Results*

The sandstone structure (108) identified in Trench 1 was interpreted as a partially robbed fragment of the north wall of the North Transept. Structure 107 may well be surviving elements of one of the church's buttresses. The deposits overlying structures 107/8 have been attributed to the 1978 excavation by the North Cheshire Archaeological Group. This was supported by the presence of brick setts within the deposits, which are clearly visible as the existing ground surface within the site's photographic archive.

The earliest structure within Trench 2 (215) was interpreted as part of the foundations for the north wall of the Nave. However, very little of the masonry was visible in the trench to make a satisfactory conclusion. The sandstone and ironstone slabs (210/211) were interpreted as part of the floor for the north aisle of the Nave. The change from sandstone to ironstone may well represent part of a decorated floor. It was unclear whether cut 212 was the result of a previous archaeological excavation or the robbing of an internal feature of the Nave.

The overlying brick structures (207-9) probably relate to the 'old candle factory', which was first shown on town maps from 1880.

Trench 3 identified the line of the 1978 excavation (cut 311). The rectilinear cut 308 was interpreted as a disturbed grave cut which may have been partially excavated in 1978. The grave cut truncated a yellowish brown sand (303), which has been interpreted as a possible make-up deposit for a floor. The significance of the sandstone ashlar block (307) was difficult to assess, although it should be noted that no other pieces of ashlar were identified in the trenches or demolition deposits.

#### 6.2.2 *Significance*

The results of the investigation suggest that archaeologically significant deposits survive within the area of the development (Fig.5). The levels of truncation within the three trenches suggest that structural elements of the Friary survive within *c* 1 m of the current ground surface. Internal features would appear to survive at much higher levels (*c* 0.6 m below ground surface).

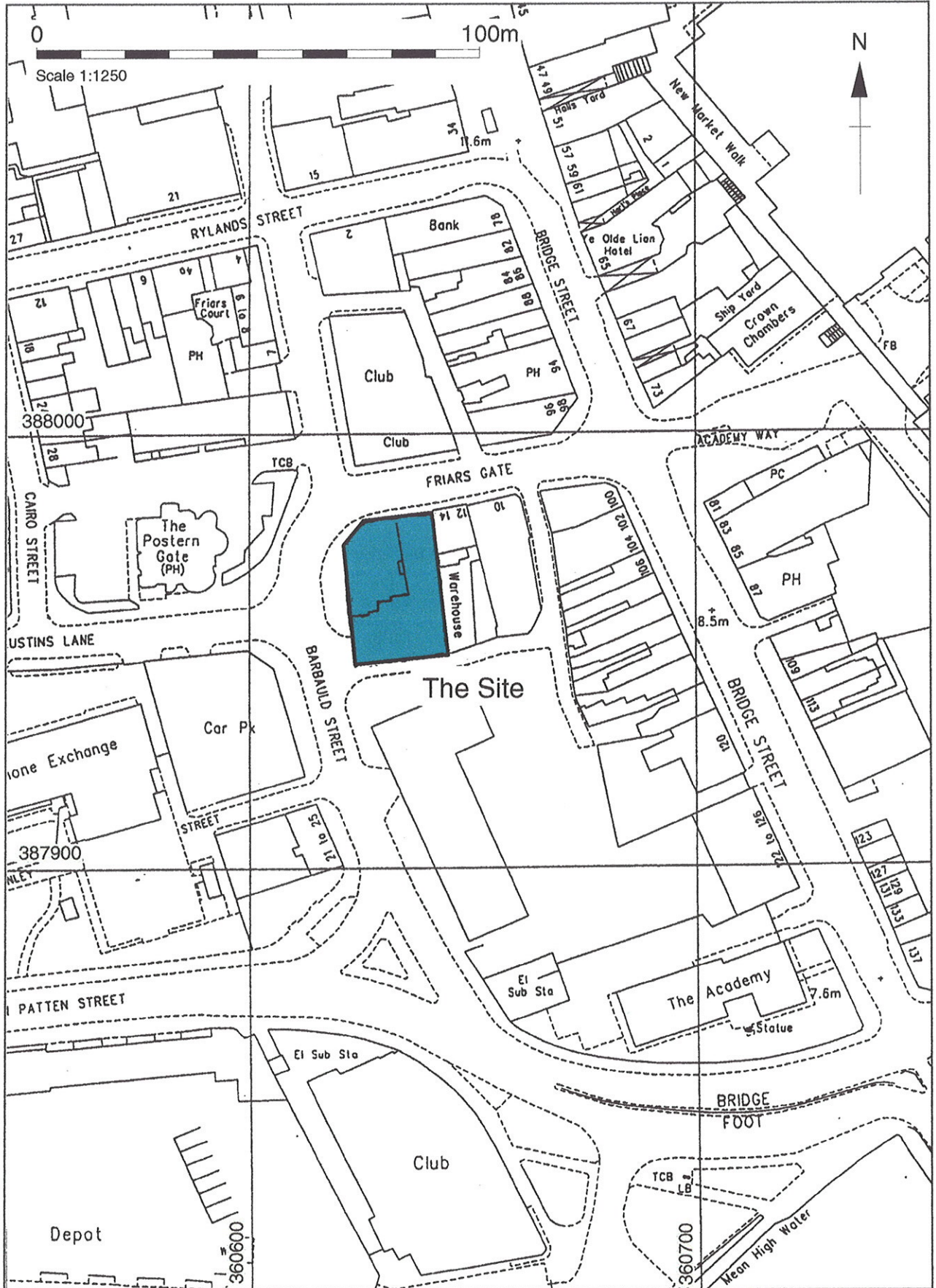
#### 6.2.3 *Impact of development*

The impact on any archaeological deposits will be determined by the final development plan. The outline development proposals incorporate plans for a shallow raft which may preserve the archaeology *insitu*.

Duncan Wood  
Oxford Archaeological Unit  
November 1998

Bibliography and references

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual* (First Edition, August 1992)



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Figure 1: Site location plan

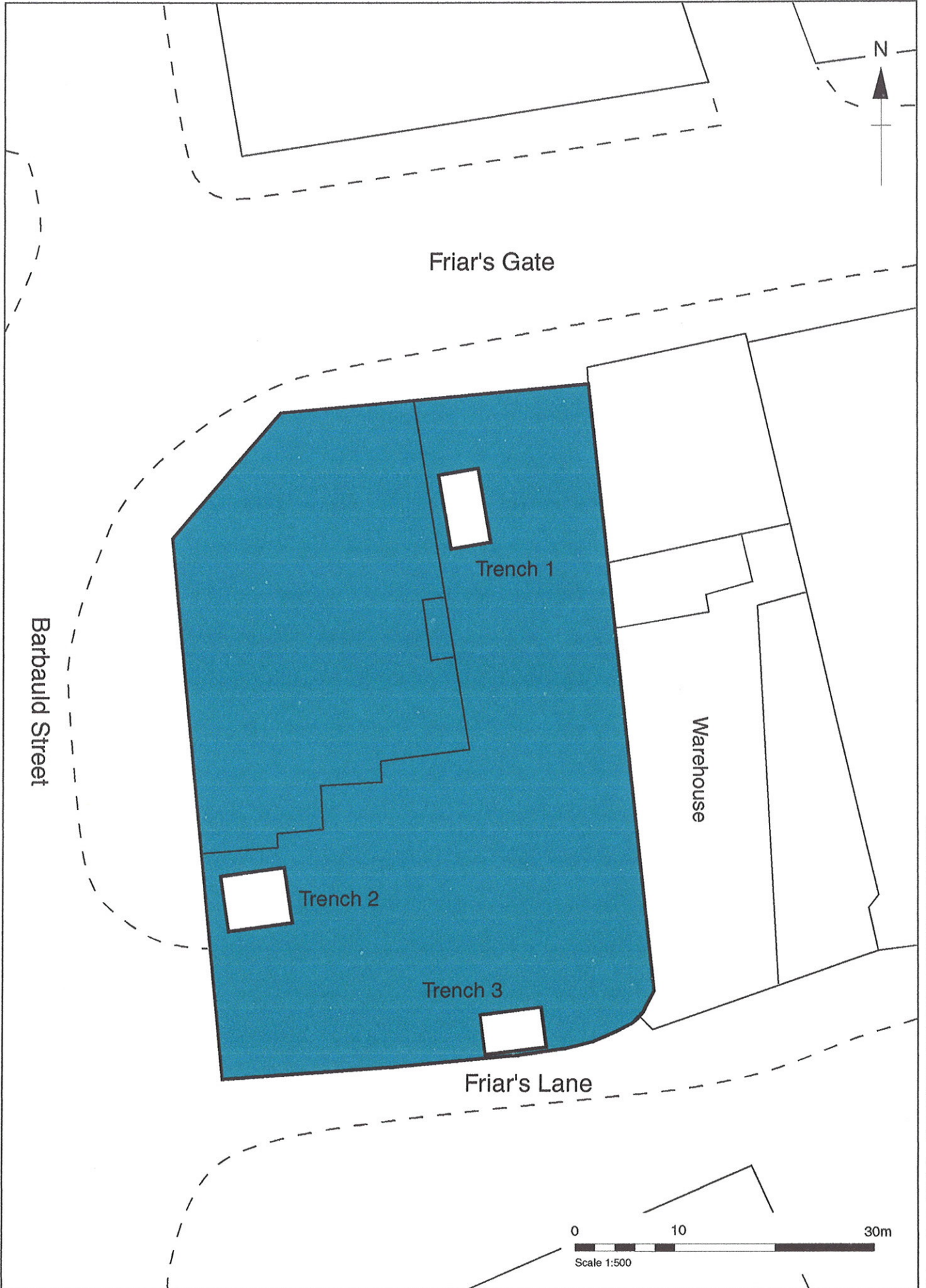


Figure 2: Trench location plan

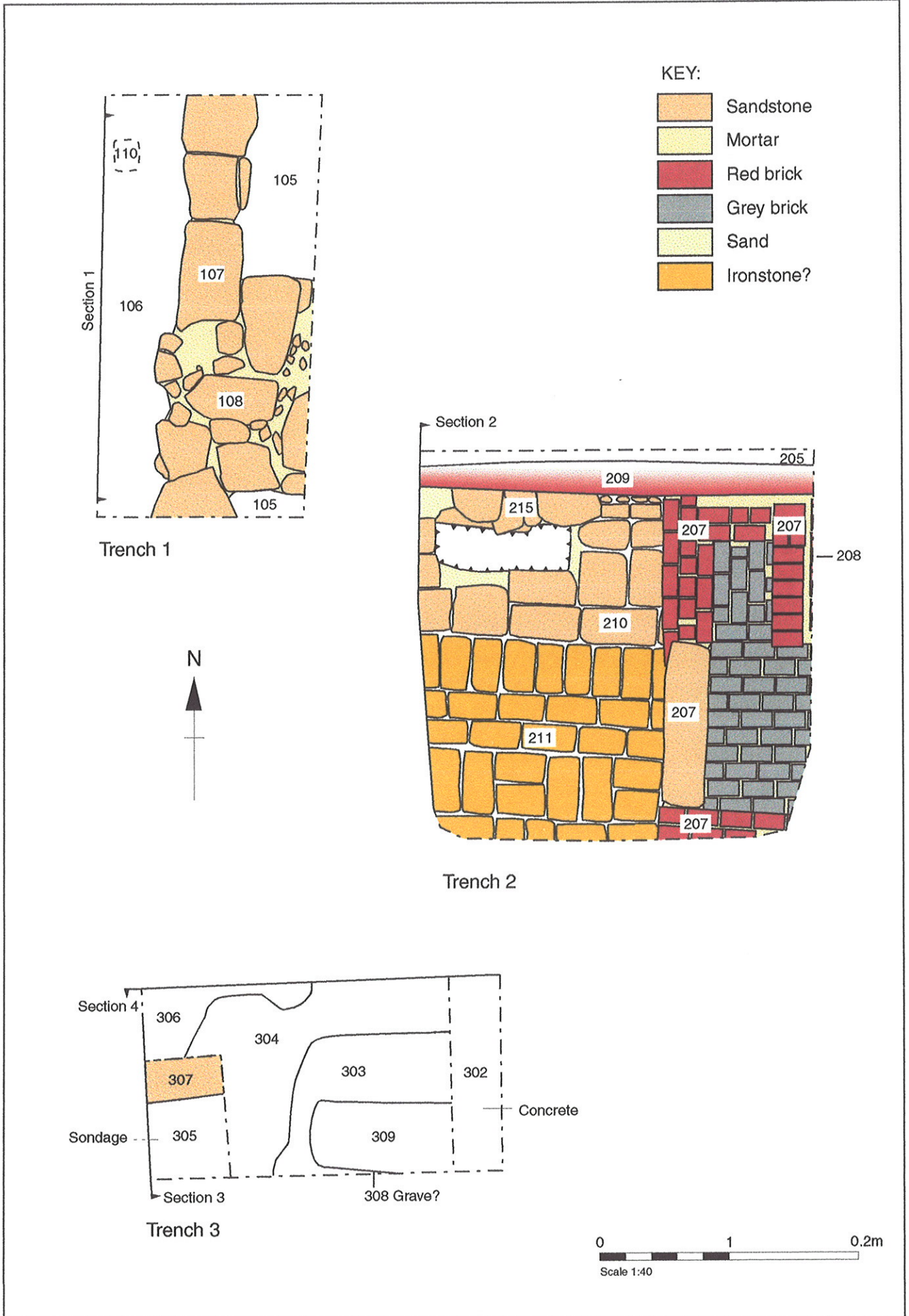


Figure 3: Trench plans

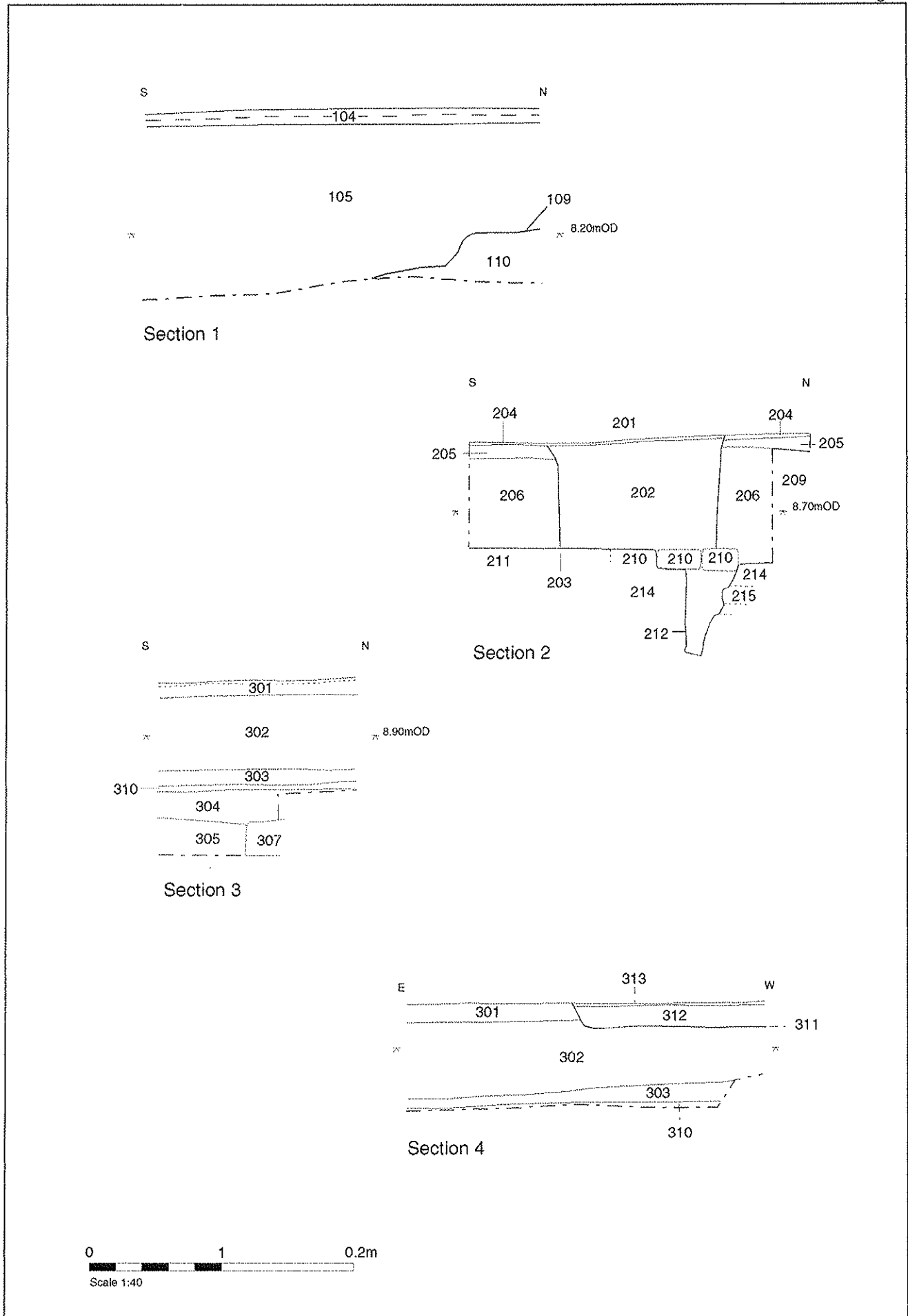


Figure 4: Sections

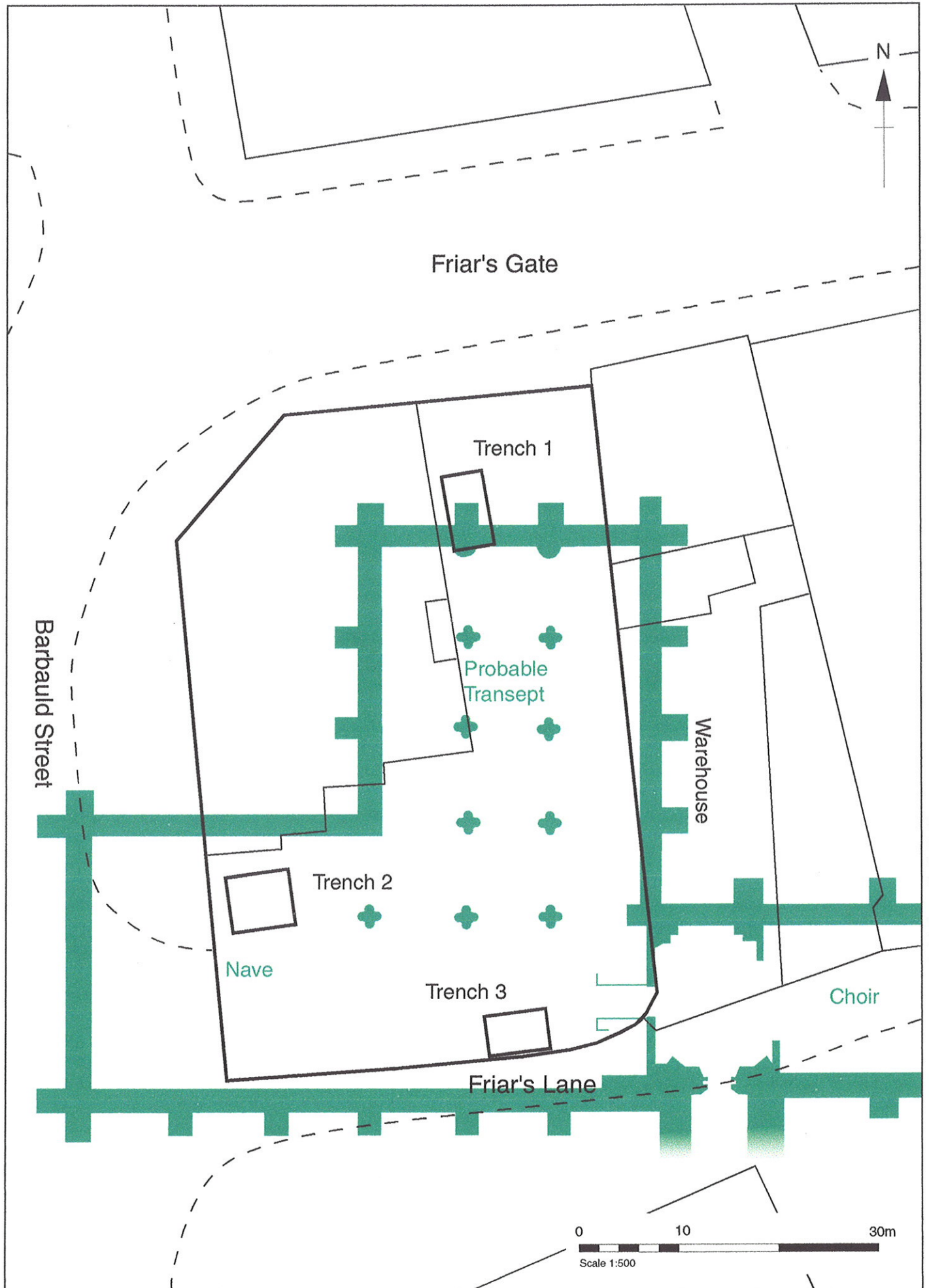


Figure 5: Projected plan of church taken from excavations of 1887, 1904 and 1931



## Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds
001						
	101	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	102	Fill	1.0	0.4	Fill of 103	
	103	Cut	1.0	0.4	Modern test pit / trench	
	104	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	105	Layer		1.2	Dumped backfill deposit	Yes
	106	Cut			Fill of 109	
	107	Structure	0.45		Sandstone wall	
	108	Structure	1.1		Sandstone wall	
	109	Cut	0.5	0.5	Foundation cut / 1978 Excavation	
	110	Layer	0.5		Sandy deposit	
002						
	201	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	202	Fill	1.8	0.9	Fill of 203	
	203	Cut	1.8	0.9	Modern test pit / trench	
	204	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	205	Layer		Up to 0.2	Concrete slab	
	206	Layer		0.6	Dumped backfill deposit	
	207	Structure	1.2	0.6	Post-medieval brickwork	
	208	Structure			Post-medieval brickwork	
	209	Structure	1.2	0.5	Post-medieval brickwork	
	210	Layer	1.2	0.2	Floor surface	
	211	Layer	1.7		Floor surface	Yes
	212	Cut	0.5	0.8	Irregular cut through floor 210	
	213	Fill	0.5	0.8	Fill of 212	
	214	Layer		0.65+	Sandy deposit	
	215	Structure		0.65	Sandstone foundation	

003						
	301	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	302	Layer		0.6	Dumped backfill deposit	
	303	Layer		0.15	Possible make-up for floor	
	304	Layer		0.3	Sandy deposit	
	305	Layer		0.3	Sandy deposit	
	306	Layer	0.6		Possible fragment of a clay floor	
	307	Structure			Sandstone ashlar block	
	308	Cut	0.5	0.1 +	Disturbed grave cut	
	309	Fill	0.5	0.1 +	Fill of 308	Yes
	310	Layer		0.08	Sandy deposit	
	311	Cut	1.5	0.4	Line of 1978 excavation	
	312	Fill	1.5	0.4	Fill of 311	
	313	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	

## APPENDIX 2

### Land at Friars Gate / Barbauld Street Warrington, Cheshire Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is proposed to construct a traditional ale, wine and food bar on the land at Friars Gate / Barbauld Street, Warrington (Planning refs. 97/37134 & 37136). A field evaluation by trial trenching has been requested to assess the archaeological implications and possible impact levels. The proposed building is two-storey, with basement cellars and will cover most of the site area.
- 1.2. The site lies within the historic core of the town of Warrington (NGR SJ 6063 8797), within the precinct of the medieval Friary and over the site of the Friary church. The development area covers approximately 0.07 ha to the Southeast of the junction of Friars Gate and Barbauld Street.
- 1.3. This Written Scheme of Investigation details how the Oxford Archaeological Unit would implement the requirements of the Archaeological Officer (Cheshire County Council). The first part is site specific while the appendices detail general OAU standards and procedures.

#### 2. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1. The Warrington Friary has never been satisfactorily established although the site is historically recorded as having been established in 1291. The friary prospered during the medieval period before being dissolved in 1536, and granted to Sir Thomas Holcroft in 1540. The site was granted to John Caldwell in 1543, on the condition that the people of Warrington were allowed to continue using the church.
- 2.2. The date of the destruction of the friary church is uncertain. It appears on a map of Warrington dating from 1643 but has disappeared by the time of the next map, which dates from 1772.
- 2.3. The site of the friary has been the subject of nine archaeological investigations in the last 120 years. These excavations confirm that the present development area overlies the friary church. Excavations by Beamont, Worsley and Owen in the 1880's uncovered part of some of the column bases, a section of the northern wall and some inhumations in wooden coffins.
- 2.4. Excavation in the 1930's led to the production of a comprehensive site plan. These excavations identified the northern and western walls of the nave. A section of a wall is described as being found 'under cellar floor of house'. This would indicate that the lower levels of the friary are likely to survive beneath the existing cellar or basement on site.
- 2.5. Excavations in 1978 by the North Cheshire Archaeological Group investigated 172 square metres of the site (60% of the car park). Unfortunately the archive does not include

a plan of the site showing which areas were investigated. The excavation was carried out in two stages. Phase I identified 28 graves with multiple burials described as being 'in a remarkable state of preservation. It is unclear whether these were removed or whether they are still in-situ. Two other burials were identified in the wall of the aisle, and the other beneath an incised grave slab (now stored in the museum). The excavations are believed to have truncated two periods of tile flooring, overlying an early clay floor.

- 2.6. Phase II excavated a further 72 square metres of the site, identifying a further fifteen burials and structural elements of the transept's foundation.
- 2.7. In 1982 Liverpool University investigated an area at Bridge Foot to the south of the proposed site. Remains relating to the friary included a ditch and mosaic floor tiles.
- 2.8. An excavation in 1984, on the site of the former Co-op Store, exposed a probable robber trench of the friary wall. The excavation identified extensive demolition phases, but no in situ material of medieval date.
- 2.9. The final phase of investigation was in 1995 by Gifford and Partners. This encountered walls of the friary church, and probably the cloister. The work also identified a number of robber trenches and 17<sup>th</sup> century pits.

### **3. Aims of the Investigation**

- 3.1. To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 3.2. To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 3.3. To establish the depth of surviving archaeological remains below present ground level and if possible beneath the existing cellar. This is designed to be as non-intrusive as possible.
- 3.4. To establish the approximate location, density and depth below ground level of any burials which may be affected by the development. All burials will be preserved in-situ.
- 3.5. To make available the results of the investigation.

### **4. Strategy**

- 4.1. The evaluation will comprise two trenches measuring 2 m x 4 m within the footprint of the development area. These will be machine excavated to the first archaeological horizon. Further excavation below this horizon will be by hand.
- 4.2. The option of a third trench or extension to the previous two will be retained at the discretion of the Archaeological officer. The excavation of a new trench will only take place following the reinstatement of the original trenches. The excavation should not exceed the client's proposed level of impact.
- 4.3. Spoil will be stored adjacent to the excavations for reinstatement.

- 4.4. The evaluation will attempt to identify the depth of archaeological material. This should take place outside areas that are to be preserved in-situ and preferably within areas already impacted by previous excavations. This phase of excavation may only take place following discussions with the Archaeological Officer.
- 4.5. The nature of the evaluation (i.e. preservation in-situ) will limit the requirement for comprehensive sampling. Where necessary, soil samples will only be taken from securely dated deposits. Dry sampling typically requires a sample of 40 litres; if the deposit is less than 40 litres a 100% sample will be taken. Samples of waterlogged remains require a sample of 10 litres.
- 4.6. Site procedures as defined in Appendix 2.
- 4.7. It is envisaged that the work will be undertaken by a team comprising a Supervisor and two technicians under the general direction of R.G Williams MIFA (Head of Fieldwork).

## **5. Report and Archive preparation**

- 5.1. The report will be completed within three weeks of the end of on-site work. Copies of the report will be forwarded to the Archaeological Officer and to the client.
- 5.2. The content and style of the report will be as defined in Appendix 8.
- 5.3. The site archive will be deposited with the Warrington Museum & Art Gallery - see Appendix 8.

## **6. General**

- 6.1. Appendix 11 is relevant.

Duncan Wood  
Oxford Archaeological Unit

## OAU Standard Fieldwork Methodology Appendices

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The following methods and terms will apply, where appropriate, to all OAU fieldwork unless varied by undertakings specified in a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation.

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### 2 MACHINE EXCAVATED TRENCHES

- 2.1 A visual inspection of the entire site will be undertaken. This will include the examination of any available exposures (e.g. recently cut field ditches and geological test pits).
- 2.2 An appropriate mechanical excavator will be used for machine excavated trenches. This will normally be a JCB 3CX Sitemaster or 360° tracked excavator with a 5' or 6' wide toothless bucket. For work with restricted access or working room a mini excavator such as a Kubota KH 90 will be used.
- 2.3 All machining will be undertaken under direct archaeological supervision.
- 2.4 All undifferentiated topsoil or overburden of recent origin will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon, in successive, level spits.
- 2.5 Following machine clearance, all faces of the trench that require examination or recording will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.
- 2.6 Spoil heaps will be monitored in order to recover artefacts to assist in the analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts. Modern artefacts will be noted but not retained.
- 2.7 All investigation of archaeological levels will be by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section.
- 2.8 Within significant archaeological levels a minimum number of features required to meet the aims will be hand excavated. Pits and postholes will be subject to a 50% sample by volume. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. Features not suited to excavation within narrow trenches will not be sampled. No archaeological deposits will be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable. It is not necessarily the intention that all trial trenches will be fully excavated to natural stratigraphy, but the depth of archaeological deposits across the entire site will be assessed. The stratigraphy of all evaluation trenches will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 2.9 Any excavation, both by machine and by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be worthy of preservation *in situ*.
- 2.10 Different environmental sampling strategies may be employed according to established research targets and the perceived importance of the strata under investigation. Bulk samples, a minimum of 10 litres, but up to 30 litres if possible for early prehistoric features will be taken for flotation for charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from any waterlogged deposits present for macroscopic plant remains. Columns for

pollen analysis will be taken if appropriate. Mollusc samples will be collected if present. Other bulk samples for small animal bones and other small artefacts may be taken from appropriate contexts.

- 2.11 Any finds of human remains will be left in-situ, covered and protected and the coroner informed. If removal is essential it will only take place under appropriate Home Office licence, section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 and local environmental health regulations, and if appropriate in compliance with the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981.
- 2.12 All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal can not be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 2.13 The OAU welcomes monitoring visits by the local authorities' archaeological representatives. Timetables of the on-site work will be provided in order that visits can be made at appropriate times.
- 2.14 After recording, the trenches will be backfilled with excavated material, but will otherwise not be reinstated.

## RECORDING

- 2.15 Contexts
- If less than ten trenches are to be recorded, a block of numbers, in a continuous sequence will be allocated to each trench.
  - If more than ten trenches are to be recorded, a continuous unique numbering system will operate within each trench only.
  - Written descriptions will be recorded on proforma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements.
  - Where stratified deposits are encountered a Harris matrix will be compiled during the course of the excavation.
- 2.16 Plans
- These will normally drawn at 1:100, but on urban or deeply stratified sites a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 will be used. Detailed plans will be at an appropriate scale. Burials will be drawn at scale 1:10.
  - The site grid will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
  - A register of plans will be kept.
- 2.17 Sections
- Long sections of trenches showing layers will be drawn at 1:50. Sections of features or short lengths of trenches will be drawn at 1:20.
  - A register of sections will be kept.
  - Generally all sections will be tied in to Ordnance Datum. The exception to this is where the proposal for the site is mineral extraction where depth in relation to the development proposals is irrelevant. In these cases only some significant sections will be tied in to OD.

## 2.18 Photography

- A full black and white and colour (35 mm transparency) photographic record, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered will be maintained. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological work.
- Photographs will be recorded on OAU Photographic Record Sheets.

2.19 All recording will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the OAU Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson 1992).

## FINDS

2.20 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material or post medieval pottery may sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained. However, no finds will be discarded without the prior approval of the nominated representative of the local authority and the receiving Museum. All appropriate ironwork will be X-rayed.

2.21 The pottery and other relevant artefacts will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage.

2.22 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner and to standards agreed in advance with the approved recipient museum. These will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in UKIC's "Conservation Guidelines No. 2".

2.23 The level of artefact analysis will be sufficient to establish date ranges of archaeological deposits, a general assessment of the types of pottery and other artefacts to assist in characterising the archaeology, and to establish the potential for all categories of artefacts should further archaeological work be necessary.

2.24 At the beginning of a project, the local relevant museum and the landowner will be contacted regarding the preparation and deposition of the archive and finds.

2.25 Environmental samples, if appropriate will be processed and scanned for potential date. This will usually be co-ordinated by Dr M Robinson of University Museum, Oxford using appropriate specialists.

## 8 EVALUATION REPORTS

8.1 Style and format of the report will be determined by OAU, but will include as a minimum the following:

- A location plan of trenches and/or other fieldwork in relation to the proposed development.
- Plans and sections of features located at an appropriate scale.
- A section drawing showing depth of deposits including present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale.
- A summary statement of the results.
- A table summarising per trench the features, classes and numbers of artefacts contained within, spot dating of significant finds and an interpretation.
- A reconsideration of the methodology used, and a confidence rating for the results.
- An interpretation of the archaeological findings both within the site and within their wider landscape/townscape setting.



- 8.2 Copies of the report will be supplied to the client and the Archaeological Officer monitoring the works. Copies of the report will also be supplied to the County Sites and Monuments Record on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (normally six months).
- 8.3 If the evaluation works generate archaeological results of importance which merit wider publication, the client will be consulted about further arrangements.

## ARCHIVES

- 8.4 The site archive, including finds and environmental material, will be ordered, catalogued, labelled and conserved and stored according to the UKIC Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage.
- 8.5 The site archive will be prepared to at least the minimum acceptable standard defined in Management of Archaeological Projects 2, English Heritage 1991.
- 8.6 The site archive will be microfilmed by the RCHME National Archaeological Record as a safeguard against the accidental loss and the long-term degeneration of paper records and photographs.
- 8.7 The site archive will be deposited with the relevant receiving Museum at the earliest opportunity unless further archaeological work on the site is expected within one year of completion of the archive. The OAU will advise the landowner that any artefacts resulting from the project work should be given to the relevant Museum.

## 11 GENERAL

- 11.1 The requirements of the Brief will be met in full where reasonably practicable.
- 11.2 Any significant variations to the proposed methodology will be agreed with the local authority's archaeological representative in advance.
- 11.3 The scope of work detailed in the main part of the Written Scheme of Investigation is aimed at meeting the aims of the project in a cost effective manner. The Oxford Archaeological Unit attempts to foresee possible site specific problems and resource these. However there may be unusual circumstances which have not been included in the costing and programme.
- Unavoidable delays due to extreme bad weather, vandalism, etc.
  - Complex structures or objects, including those in waterlogged conditions, requiring specialist removal.
  - Extensions to specified trenches or feature sample sizes requested by the archaeological curator.
  - Trenches requiring shoring or stepping, ground contamination, unknown services, poor ground conditions requiring additional plant, specialist reinstatement of surfaces (i.e. tarmac, turf).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY and INSURANCE

- 11.4 All work will be carried out to the requirements of *Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974*, *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992*, the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) H & S manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology 1991*, the OAU Health and Safety Policy, and any main contractors requirements.
- 11.5 A copy of the OAU's Health and Safety Policy is available on request. OAU will require copies of the H & S policies of all other contractors and operators present on site in compliance with *The Manual of H & S-Regulations 1992*.
- 11.6 The OAU holds Employers Liability Insurance, Public Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance. Details will be supplied on request.
- 11.7 The OAU will not be liable to indemnify the client against any compensation or damages for or with respect to:
- Damage to crops being on the Area or Areas of Work (save in so far as possession has not been given to the Archaeological Contractor);
  - The use or occupation of land (which has been provided by the Client) by the Project or for the purposes of completing the Project (including consequent loss of crops) or interference whether temporary or permanent with any right of way, light, air or water or other easement or quasi easement which are the unavoidable result of the Project in accordance with the Agreement;
  - Any other damage which is the unavoidable result of the Project in accordance with the Agreement;
  - Injuries or damage to persons or property resulting from any act or neglect or breach of statutory duty done or committed by the client or his agents, servants or their contractors (not being employed by the Oxford Archaeological Unit) or for or in respect of any claims demands proceedings damages costs charges and expenses in respect thereof or in relation thereto.

## COPYRIGHT and CONFIDENTIALITY

- 11.8 Oxford Archaeological Unit will retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it will provide an exclusive licence to the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 11.9 Oxford Archaeological Unit will assign copyright to the client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Chapter IV, s.79).
- 11.10 OAU will advise the client of any such materials supplied in the course of projects which are not OAU's copyright.
- 11.11 OAU undertakes to respect all requirements for confidentiality about the client's proposals provided that these are clearly stated. It is expected that such conditions shall not unreasonably impede the satisfactory performance of the services required. OAU further undertake to keep confidential any conclusions about the likely implications of such proposals for the historic environment. It is expected that clients respect OAU's

general ethical obligations not to suppress significant archaeological data for an unreasonable period.

#### OAU STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

- 11.12 OAU shall conform to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, the IFA Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, the IFA Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluations, Desk Based Assessments, etc. and the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice.
- 11.13 OAU is a member of the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Council for British Archaeology.
- 11.14 Project Directors normally will be recognised in an appropriate Area of Competence by the IFA. For more extensive and complicated evaluation projects especially where they are part of large-scale programmes of work in historic urban centres, the procedures outlined in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* 2nd Edition 1991 (MAP 2) will be followed for immediate post-field archive preparation and initial assessment. Agreement to then be reached, in collaboration with the local authority's archaeological representative, about what aspects will need to be taken forward to provide a report in the required format containing the information needed for planning purposes.

**Warrington Friary  
Archaeological and Historical Background  
Desk-based Assessment**

1. *The Period Prior to the Establishment of the Friary*

Although Prehistoric remain have been found in the Mersey Valley area no major finds have been made in Warrington Town Centre and the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record records no evidence of prehistoric activity from the immediate vicinity of the development site. Activity in the vicinity of the friary site is suggested by two pottery spot finds (SMR ref. 628 and 629), and a silver Roman coin (SMR 631). The known focus of Roman activity in the Warrington area however lies at Wilderspool, approximately 2km to the south of the friary site. Excavations at Wilderspool in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 1960's demonstrated the presence of an extensive settlement and industrial site.. The main Roman road in Warrington, runs between Wilderspool and Wigan (roughly north-west to south-east), approximately 900m to the north east of the site and appears to cross the Mersey near to the parish church.

The settlement at Warrington was probably established in the Anglo-Saxon period. During this period the area lay on the border of the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, the boundary most likely being the river Mersey (the name of which is derived from the Old English *Meares-*ea**, meaning 'boundary river' and there has been some speculation that Warrington may have represented the site of one of the Mercian Burghs set up in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century to defend the northern boundary of the kingdom. The settlement, which is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) was certainly in existence by the middle of the eleventh century.

2. *Warrington Friary and the Subsequent History of the Church.*

The hermit friars of the order of St. Austin first came to England in 1248 at the request of the Earl of Gloucester. The date of foundation of the Warrington Friary has never been satisfactorily established: the site is historically recorded as having been officially established in 1291 although Beamont (1872) argues convincingly that the date of the foundation could be earlier (based on architectural and documentary evidence). The houses of the order were generally planted in towns as the friars claimed no endowments and were dependent upon charity. The friary continued to grow throughout the medieval period, for example the adding of a hall in 1410. The friary was dissolved in 1536, and granted to Sir Thomas Holcroft in 1540, who then disposed of the site to John Caldwell in 1543, on the condition both that the people of Warrington were allowed to continue using the church and that Holcroft could continue to take stone from the site. This strongly suggests that the friary site is likely to have been robbed out by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century but that the church site is likely to have survived for longer than this. The church, now named Jesus Church, was visited in 1592 by Lawrence Bostocke who made a list of the arms depicted in the windows, and the monuments.

The date of the destruction of the friary church is uncertain. It is mentioned in a 1640 and appears on a map of Warrington dating from 1643 but has disappeared by the time of the next map, which dates from 1772. Warrington was badly damaged during the Civil War, being the scene of both a siege and a battle and it would appear that

much of the town was either blown up or burnt during this period. It is therefore possible that the Friary church was destroyed during these years.

### 3. *Activity on the Site After the Demolition of the Church.*

The earliest detailed plan of the town dates from 1772. This plan shows the church has been demolished and the site appears to have been largely redeveloped. The plan shows the site occupied by a building on the corner of Friars Gate and Friars Green (now Barbauld Street), and a large building to the south and west of the site. By the time of the 1826 map however, the building on the corner of Friars Gate and Friars Green has gone and the site is now a garden. This is the area of the present standing buildings. The O.S. Borough plan of 1851 shows no change to this, but in addition shows the site of two pumps, and a probable gas main. By the time of the next available map, the 1880 1:500 first edition map, the building on the site is identified as a candle manufactory. This building is also shown on the first and second edition 25" maps of 1893, and 1907. By the time of the second edition, 1907, the open area on the corner of Friars Green and Friars Gate has been developed. This building appears to have been enlarged by the time of the third edition 25" map, although the factory buildings appear to have remained unaltered. The factory, described as the 'old candle factory' in 1936 (Owen) was demolished in 1931 to make room for an open garage.

### **Previous excavations of the Friary Site**

The site of the friary has been the subject of nine archaeological investigations in the last 120 years. These excavations have produced a wealth of valuable information about the nature of the buildings on the site and suggest, beyond any reasonable doubt, that the present development area is likely to overlie the site of the friary church. The various investigations have enabled a fairly comprehensive groundplan of this structure to be established (see Figure 5).

The first investigation of the site occurred in 1870 when sewer excavations in Bridge Street produced a stone vault with a male skeleton. Also found were silver and copper coins and a probable civil war cannon ball. (Smith 1870 126).

In 1887 excavations by Beamont, Worsley and Owen in 1887 encountered substantial remains of the Friary Church both within the area of the proposed development and within the area to the east. Within the proposed development site the 1880's excavations uncovered part of some of the column bases, some inhumations in wooden coffins and a small section of the northern wall of the church. The most impressive finds however came from the section of the site to the east which uncovered a large section of tiled floor and more substantial remains of the southern walls of the church. Numerous photographs of these excavations were examined at Warrington Museum during the initial background research into this project. Unfortunately these were less helpful than had originally been hoped and little evidence of the depth at which the foundations were encountered or the nature of post-medieval disturbance to the remains was obtained. The photographs of the tiled floor of the choir suggest that this floor was relatively undamaged. The floor was apparently lifted and is now in storage in Warrington Museum (C. Taylor, Curator, Warrington Museum, *pers comm*).

Further walls were observed during (unspecified) building activities in 1904. Within the proposed development site the 1904 observations noted a line of foundation stones representing the northern wall of the church to the west (but on the same alignment as) the

wall discovered in the 1880's. Immediately to the east of the site the observations noted the foundations of a buttress and the base courses of a section of north-south orientated wall. We know little of the context of these discoveries, our only information coming from a composite plan produced to illustrate the finds of a more comprehensive excavation conducted in the 1930's (Owen & Cheetah 1936). Interestingly the 1930's plan describes the section of wall within the development site as having been found 'under Cellar floor of house'. This seems to indicate that the lower levels of the friary foundations are likely to survive even beneath the lower level of the basements or cellars on the site. This section of walling was located within the area of the modern day car park.

Further excavations on the site were carried out in 1931 following the demolition of the candle factory that had previously occupied the southern portion of the proposed development site. These excavations uncovered two sections of walling, representing the western and northern walls of the nave. One of these ranges is situated within the area of the proposed development. The excavation also uncovered, and further investigated, one of the column bases located in the 1887 excavation and revealed the remains of three skeletons and part of a coffin. These were also located within the area of the proposed development.

Further excavations were carried out within the area of the proposed development in 1978. These excavations were carried out by an amateur group, The North Cheshire Archaeological Group, under the supervision of Barry Johnson and Pauline Bearpark apparently in advance of the construction of a new building on the car park site. This development in fact never happened and the likely site of these excavations remains sealed beneath the present day car park. The results of these excavations have never been published and no record of the excavations has been encountered in any of the later discussions of the site, which were consulted for this project. The only record of the site is a single A4 typescript, apparently produced by Johnson and Bearpark at the request of Colin Taylor of Warrington Museum, and a collection of over 50 slides which were taken for the project and were deposited with Warrington Museum.

The brief write up indicates that the 1978 excavation involved examination of 172 square metres of the car park site. This is approximately 60% of the total area of the car park. Unfortunately the archive does not include a plan of the site showing which areas were excavated. The brief write up indicates that the excavation was carried out in two phases.

Phase 1 excavated 100 square metres of the site and discovered 28 graves some with multiple burials. Three wooden coffins were also found, which were described as being 'in a remarkable state of preservation'. It is unclear from the report whether these were removed or whether they are still in-situ on the site. Two other burials were found, one in the wall of the aisle, and the other beneath a 13th c incised grave slab (now stored at the museum). The excavation appears to have cut through all archaeological layers, at least in places, as the report states that 'Stratigraphic evidence suggests two periods of tile flooring, overlying an early clay floor which showed evidence of burning'.

Phase two excavated 72 square metres of the site, in two areas described as being to the north and south of the main excavation, which were previously covered by spoil heaps from Phase 1. The northern section revealed the foundations of the 4ft wide buttressed north wall of the transept (which makes its general location fairly easy to place within the plan of the church). A further fifteen burials were uncovered, several of which are described as 'churchyard burials prior to the erection of the transept'. The report states that 'three unusually well preserved wooden coffins were found, one of which is being conserved by Warrington Museum'. Mr Taylor of Warrington Museum advises that the coffin is now on display in the museum, and that the other two were left in situ.. The oak wood of these coffins he said was

about three inches thick, and in a very good state of preservation. It is unclear whether these three well preserved coffins; are the same three coffins described in Phase One.

The southern section of Phase One is described as uncovering twelve further burials, two of which appeared to post-date the demolition of the friary church. This section of the excavation is described as having been conducted within the area already examined (presumably this refers to the 1887 excavation). The 1978 excavation however demonstrated that the 19<sup>th</sup> century excavation had not fully examined the area but had merely located and removed some of the column bases. The report further states that the excavation revealed the east transept wall, which is recorded as having been found to be in a 'good state of preservation'. Unfortunately the report does not state which of the three phases encountered the walls.

The area to the south of the proposed site has been the subject of a further four excavations which have helped to clarify the nature of the buildings to the south of the church site. In 1982 Liverpool University investigated an area at Bridge Foot to the south of the proposed site. The excavations were due to road widening. Remains relating to the Friary included a ditch and mosaic floor tiles were discovered.

An excavation in 1984, on the site of the former Co-op Store, to the south of the proposed development site found extensive disturbance to the Friary remains, and a probable robber trench of the friary wall. The investigation encountered extensive demolition phases, but no material of medieval date in situ.

In 1995 Gifford and Partners investigated another area to the south of the proposed development site. Here they encountered the walls of the friary church, and probably those of the cloister. A number of robber trenches were also encountered and also a number of 17th century pits these have been interpreted as sand extraction pits. All but one of the evaluation trenches encountered deep post medieval deposits to a depth of between 1 and 2 metres. The remaining trench encountered the friary church at a depth of 0.65m.

A watching brief also by Gifford and Partners in 1995 encountered further walls of the friary, which help to further the understanding of the layout of the friary buildings.

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- |                      |  |
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Cartographic and Documentary Sources held by Warrington Local Studies Library.

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## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [oau-oxford.demon.co.uk](mailto:oau-oxford.demon.co.uk)



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Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.  
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES